DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 428 202 CE 078 235

| | |
|---|---|
| TITLE | Special Session: The Essential Competencies for Internal and External OD Consultants: Present and Future. |
| PUB DATE | 1997-03-00 |
| NOTE | 10p.; In: Academy of Human Resource Development (AHRD) Conference Proceedings (Atlanta, Georgia, March 6-9, 1997); see CE 078 221. |
| PUB TYPE | Reports - Research (143) -- Speeches/Meeting Papers (150) |
| EDRS PRICE | EDRS Price MF01 Plus Postage. PC Not Available from EDRS. |
| DESCRIPTORS | Adult Education; *Competence; *Competency Based Education; *Consultants; *Educational Needs; Labor Force Development; Online Systems; *Organizational Development; Professional Occupations |

ABSTRACT

Competencies essential for organization development consultants, internal and external, have evolved over 20 years, based on literature and feedback from nearly 2,000 practitioners and academics. Further research is being conducted to determine what competencies are essential for internal and external organization development consultants today and in five years. The research is based on the 17th revision of the Organization Development Professional Competencies List (Rothwell et al. 1997) and involves a literature search and input received during the 1997 Conference of the Academy of Human Resource Development. During an interactive session, participants will review the existing list in small groups, suggesting items to eliminate, reword, and add, along with a rationale. The list determined by the participants will be put on the Internet for further review and comment before publication. (Contains 15 references) (KC)

**********
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
**********

ED 428 202

AHRD

ACADEMY OF
HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

# 1997 Conference Proceedings

## March 6-9, 1997
## Atlanta, GA

13 **Special Session: The Essential Competencies for Internal and External OD Consultants: Present and Future**

**Chair: Gary N. McLean, University of Minnesota**

*This is a unique opportunity for AHRD members to participate in a worldwide OD competency study. Competencies essential for organization development consultants, internal and external, have evolved over 20 years based on literature and feedback from nearly 2,000 practitioners and academics. Participants in this session will provide input into an 18th revision using small groups to create a list of competencies needed in five years. This data will be combined with similar data from other professional organizations, before a "final" revision is put on the Web for world-wide feedback. This will be a highly interactive session.*

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)
☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.
• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

G McLean

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

CE 078 235



BEST COPY AVAILABLE

# The Essential Competencies for Internal and External OD Consultants: Present and Future

*Gary N. McLean*
*University of Minnesota*

*Competencies essential for organization development consultants, internal and external, have evolved over 20 years based on literature and feedback from nearly 2,000 practitioners and academics. Participants will provide input into an 18th revision in small groups, in conjunction with other professional organizations, before a "final" revision is put on the Web for world-wide feedback. Small groups will also create a list of competencies needed in five years. This will be a highly interactive session.*

While organization development (OD) has become a key component of most definitions of human resource development (see, for example, McLagan, 1989), it is still a relatively new professional field. While Cummings and Worley (1993) trace the roots of OD back to the 1930s, it is generally agreed that the first use of the term "organization development" occurred in the early 1960s. Its place of prominence was assured with the successful Addison-Wesley series of texts in the Organization Development series in 1969.

The only existing certification process in organization development (The Organization Development Institute) (Cole, 1997) is a paper-and-pencil test rather than competency-based. Further, the certification (Registered Organization Development Consultant, RODC) is not widely recognized and required for employment. As a result, until the growth of academic programs in OD, beginning in the early 1980s, there was no widespread demand for competencies. With the rapid growth of academic programs, however, and the increasing demand for integrity in the field, the need for widely-accepted competencies has become increasingly important.

## Problem Statement

The questions for research, then, becomes: What competencies are essential for internal and external organization development consultants today? five years from now?

## Review of Literature

Few comprehensive, well-structured, and adequately sampled studies of organization development competencies are present in the literature. Studies reported in the literature tend to focus on narrow groups of change agents (e.g., U.S. Navy) and single countries (most often, in literature available to the author, in the United States). The focus has been on personality characteristics and behaviors applicable to specific interventions, using small numbers of respondents purposively selected, as in McLagan (1989).

Hamilton (1988) explored the relationship between personality characteristics and behavioral tendencies of "effective" organization development consultants among 105 OD consultants within the U.S. Navy. A 360-degree instrument was used to gather information about effectiveness from peers (consulting team members) and supervisors. While some personality characteristics were identified as being "more effective," the design, reliabilities, and reliance on

*(c) copyright, Gary N. McLean, 1997*

personality traits, with all of the problems associated with their use, diminish the value of this study in contributing toward competencies for OD consultants. However, the literature review was very useful. A review of almost fifty articles on "effective consultant personality characteristics and behaviors" led Hamilton (1988) to the conclusion that

> few articles were found that systematically and empirically assessed the personality characteristics or skills that would predict successful consulting efforts and successful consultants. Much of the literature, however, expressed *opinions* as to the requisite characteristics of effective consultants. These opinions were based either on personal experience, a survey of the consultants in the field, or on theory. (pp. 39-40)

She then went on to conclude from this literature review that effective consultants met characteristics in three categories: "(1) openness and responsiveness to others' needs and concerns, (2) comfort with ambiguity and the ability to make sense of it, and (3) comfort with oneself in relation to others" (p. 40).

Hamilton's assessment of the nature of the literature in the field reflects a clear bias toward positivism with a negation of other ways of knowing. This is an interesting perspective, given the commitment of OD toward the understanding of one's "beliefs, values, and attitudes" (Bennis, 1969, p. 2). The research reported and proposed in this paper follows a process more consistent with interpretive research.

One of the early comprehensive lists was developed by Carey and Varney (1983). An interesting aspect of this list is that it contained both present and future competencies. However, the article containing the list contained no description of how the list was developed. Presumably, the list was created from personal experiences and knowledge of the literature. While useful at the time, the list is less useful today because of the sixteen years that have lapsed.

Another extensive literature review (Spencer & Cullen, 1978) identified four categories describing effective change agents: (1) rapport-building skills; (2) diagnostic skills; (3) influence skills; and (4) administrative/managerial skills. As did Hamilton (1988), Spencer & Cullen (1978) presented an extensive table categorizing the extant literature into these four categories, listing the specific competencies identified by the various authors.

In 1983, the Organization Development Division of the American Society for Training and Development created an "Organization Development Practitioner Self-Assessment Guide" that included a list of competencies within four phases of "action research," the "foundation of most OD interventions" (Rothwell, Sullivan, & McLean, 1995, p. 51):

> Entry: Establishing, developing and contracting for the scope of the planned effort, roles, and relationship with the client system. Assessment: Obtaining information and processing it in order to diagnose the organization and identify areas in need of change. Planning: Examining alternative means of accomplishing the goals of the intervention and developing specific strategies for action. Implementation: Putting plans into practice and managing the intervention process. Evaluation: Gathering and analyzing information about the intervention in order to assess the effects of the change effort. (p. 1)

Within each phase, eight categories are listed, followed by specific sub-competencies based on the phase: Possesses strong self-concept, Develops common understanding, Uses personal influence effectively, Applies functional knowledge, Uses diagnostic skills, Formulates workable strategies, Implements strategies effectively, and Focuses on results. This list was developed based primarily on "extensive research conducted by McBer and Company for the U.S. Army Organization Effectiveness Center and School for developing their O.D.E. practitioners" (p. 1).

Other important studies that contributed to the list development early in the process included Burke (1982), Lippitt and Lippitt (1978), Steele (1982), Varney (1981), and Warrick and Donovan (1979). Two additional studies have particular relevance at the present time. Wigglesworth (1995) proposed six categories of competencies for OD professionals practicing internationally: "Linking skills, Self-awareness, Understanding of others, Interactive skills, Tolerance of ambiguity, and Persistence" (p. 424). Eisen, Steele, and Cherbeneau (1995)

explored trends affecting organization development and suggested competencies needed by OD professionals in order to respond appropriately in the future to these emerging trends. The themes identified included: broadened frameworks in a global environment, clients and clients' issues, cultural and demographic diversity and change, values and ethics, and trends within OD. Twenty-eight competencies were developed within these five themes.

While the literature was helpful in developing the beginning list, and has been used in modifying the list, the list is being heavily influenced by the methodology described next.

## Methodology

Now in its 17th Revision, the Organization Development Professional Competencies list (an earlier version was published in Rothwell, Sullivan, & McLean, 1995), developed by a sub-committee of The OD Institute (co-chaired by Roland Sullivan, Gary McLean, and Kristine Sullivan) is ready to move to a "final" version. From 1977 to the present, over 2,000 practitioners and change management academicians from around the world have offered input into the development of this list. Extensive literature reviews have also been carried out. The most recent revisions were based on input received at the 13th International O.D. Congress in Monterrey, Mexico; the 1994 National OD Conference in Baltimore, MD; and the Twenty-Fourth Annual Information Exchange of The Organization Development Institute in Lake Geneva, WI. An estimated 1,400 attendees at these three conferences had an opportunity to review and critique the list. Their valuable insights and suggestions have been incorporated into the current version by a committee convened at the University of Minnesota in St. Paul during December, 1994. Each revision has been based on input from professionals and organizations with the intention of continuing the growth of those who espouse continual learning as a part of their skills.

An 18th revision will be undertaken based on the input received during the 1997 Conference of the Academy of Human Resource Development. During an interactive session, participants will review the existing list in small groups, suggesting items to eliminate, reword, and add, along with a rationale. These suggestions will be collected and used as the basis for further refinement in the list. This 18th revision will then become the basis for input from the identified organizations which will follow a similar process.

Thirty or more major professional organizations in human resource development with organization development as a major focus will conduct this next step. Some of the organizations that have already expressed interest in participating include: Academy of Management (Division of Organizational Development and Change), American Society for Quality Control (Human Resource Division), American Society for Training and Development (O.D. Professional Practice Area), Association for Creative Change, Association for Quality and Participation, Gestalt Institute of Cleveland, International Organization Development Association, Mexican Organization Development Network, National Training Laboratories, The O.D. Interorganization Group World-Wide, The O. D. Network of India, Organization Development Network, and, of course, the original sponsor, The Organization Development Institute. A "final" revision will then be posted to the world-wide web to invite feedback on a world-wide basis.

However, the process, to present, has focused entirely on those competencies needed <u>now</u> by OD professionals. Another important perspective is to be forward-looking and anticipate the competencies that will be needed in the future. This session of the AHRD Conference will use newly-emerging large group intervention technology to validate the current list and to generate modifications that will need to be made to that list with a future perspective.

## Existing List

The existing list, consisting of 171 statements, are clustered according to the typical phases of the Action Research Model: Phase 1: Entry (Marketing Phase, Initial Contact Phase); Phase 2: Start-Up; Phase 3: Assessment and Feedback; Phase 4: Action/Intervention Planning; Phase 5:

Intervention; Phase 6: Evaluation; Phase 7: Adoption; Phase 8: Separation; and core competencies (Self-Awareness, Other).

The specific tasks are:

Phase 1: Entry

Marketing Phase

1. Convey professional capabilities to prospective clients using minimal O.D. jargon.
2. Identify potential client organizations that are presently undergoing crises or accelerated change or growth.
3. Identify potential client organizations with continuous improvement opportunities.
4. Assess the possibility of a match between the potential client organization's needs and the consultant's capabilities.
5. Assess the possibility of getting a contract with a potential client organization.

Initial Contact Phase:

6. Be (or become) familiar with the basic nature of the prospect's business.
7. Contact the appropriate decision-maker(s).
8. Use the language of the client system.
9. Model behaviors that contribute to developing a trusting relationship.
10. Gather introductory information about the client organization.
11. Determine the client's perception of the problem.
12. Verify a potential match.
13. Mutually identify initial outcomes to be achieved.
14. Elicit concerns about professional capabilities.
15. Articulate to the client OD processes that might be used.
16. Identify the potential outcomes, including anticipated contributions to bottom-line results.
17. Contract with the client for joint responsibility for the work.
18. Identify the process to be used by the client to give feedback to the consultant.
19. Agree on compensation structure.
20. Agree on a billing process.
21. Determine the likelihood of the client paying the fee.
22. Develop a written contract appropriate to the specific client.
23. Help the client find creative ways to fund the work.
24. Agree on the source of necessary resources--human and non-human.

Phase 2: Start-Up

25. Mutually identify the critical success factors.
26. Help clients reflect on their motivations for change.
27. Help clients create a vision of where they want to be relative to their current reality.
28. Identify the organizational structure in the client organization.
29. Identify the formal and informal power in the client organization.
30. Ensure that the desired changes are aligned with the organization's goals and objectives.
31. Develop relationships at all organizational levels.
32. Seek commitment from all affected within the organization.
33. Seek participation from all affected within the organization.
34. Deal effectively with resistance as it surfaces.
35. With the client, define the roles of all participants.
36. With the client, map out an adjustable work plan.

Phase 3: Assessment and Feedback

37. Determine data needs broadly.
38. Use an appropriate mix of data-gathering methods.
39. Establish reliability of data-gathering instruments.
40. Establish validity of data-gathering instruments.
41. Sub-contract for data collection and analysis.
42. Clarify expectations of confidentiality.
43. Clarify expectations of anonymity.
44. Design the assessment to incorporate diverse perspectives.

45. Explain different perspectives of organizational climate rooted in cultural differences.
46. Probe for root causes as issues surface.
47. Document observations accurately.
48. Facilitate the creation of a shared view of the state of the organization.
49. Point out the differences between espoused and actual behaviors.
50. Observe power behavior that affects informal systems.
51. Focus on needed improvements in major systems and processes.
52. Design processes to help large groups surface large quantities of data quickly.
53. Discriminate between useful and non-relevant information.
54. Triangulate data gathered through different approaches (e.g., records, interviews, surveys, instruments).
55. When gathering data, maintain an appropriate balance between completeness and usefulness.
56. Trust the data when a conflict occurs between the data and personal views.
57. Use statistical methods to analyze data.
58. Involve individuals and groups creatively in the interpretation of the data.
59. Compare historical or existing data with current data to determine directionality of change.
60. Compare data among subgroups in the organization.
61. Look for and identify patterns that emerge throughout the data gathering process.
62. Explain how data from different levels of the organization affect one another.
63. Using the data of the organization, determine where the organization is and where it wants to be.
64. Identify the relationships between the formal and informal systems within the organization.
65. Explore hidden causes in order to develop a thorough understanding of the problem.
66. Trace the consequences of specific organizational behaviors as they affect different parts of the organization.
67. Create an understanding of the consequences of retaliation for those people who tell it like it is.
68. Develop a non-threatening atmosphere in which people believe that working with the feedback data will result in beneficial outcomes.
69. Respond to concerns of individuals with compassion and caring.
70. Appreciate diverse cultures and their impact on choices for feedback techniques.
71. Facilitate a healthy group process that encourages free and open dialogue.
72. Facilitate thorough discussion of the data with everyone touched by the implications.
73. Present data in a manner that is valid and actionable.
74. Help the client own the relevant data.
75. Help those who provided the data to understand the purpose and framework for its use.
76. Facilitate an understanding of how the data directly relate to organizational effectiveness.
77. Ensure that all conclusions and propositions are directed toward organization changes that are relevant and feasible.
78. At the appropriate time, focus on the next steps for the client to consider.
79. Plant seeds for appropriate and meaningful interventions that lead to system commitment.
80. Facilitate a visioning process that leads to establishing the next steps for change.

<u>Phase 4: Action/Intervention Planning</u>

81. Help participants co-create a clear vision of the future.
82. Help the client evolve the process for managing the transition.
83. Help the organization take responsibility for implementing change.
84. Facilitate solutions to longstanding problems or recurring/ongoing conflicts.
85. Facilitate a participative decision-making process that critically evaluates the choices of alternative interventions.
86. Help participants brainstorm creative alternatives.

87. Facilitate a review of the intervention(s) to anticipate likely consequences, side effects, and potential gains.
88. Look to long-term strategies.
89. Ensure that there is linkage between the purpose, the activity or intervention, the support from top management, the cost, and other persons and teams in the system.
90. Build support for the implementation of action plans.
91. Help the client determine resource allocations for implementation planning.
92. Clarify all roles, responsibilities, and due dates for all implementation tasks.
93. Co-create a written implementation plan that is concrete, cost-effective, measurable, simple, clear, flexible, results-oriented, and logically-sequenced.
94. Help the organization leverage individual strengths to move toward the vision.
95. Obtain a clear commitment to evaluate outcomes early on.
96. Develop the plan so that buy-in exists at all levels of the client system.
97. Manage resistance effectively, understanding that if there is no resistance, you are probably not facilitating a change process.
98. Help the client to develop a reward system that supports the new, desired state.

Phase 5: Intervention

99. Apply integrated theories, being aware of how organizational dynamics are impacted by what the consultant does.
100. Sense timing to gain the greatest amount of impact.
101. Help the organization deal with the impact that changes in one part of the system will have on other parts.
102. Maintain patience, especially when working through the issues that are complex or emotionally charged.
103. Stay centered in the present, focusing on the ongoing process.
104. Help the client deal with barriers and resistance as they surface during the change process.
105. Create safety within the organization by planning interventions that are at an appropriate depth, neither too shallow nor too deep.
106. Ensure flexibility of interventions.
107. Use appropriate group and intergroup facilitation skills.
108. Consider a variety of interventions that are adaptable to client needs.

Phase 6: Evaluation

109. Choose an appropriate evaluation method.
110. Establish a feedback system to monitor the change effort continuously.
111. Celebrate progress relative to change goals.
112. Monitor top management responses to the intervention(s) for linkage to next steps.
113. Ensure that the consultant's actual time and cost are in line with original estimates.

Phase 7: Adoption

114. Balance the need to have a plan to guide the change effort with the flexibility to take advantage of events as the change effort unfolds.
115. Link the ongoing change process to both the organizational structure and daily operations.
116. Base changes on business strategy and business needs.
117. Shift the emphasis from project-driven to strategy-driven change.
118. Foster commitment from top management for broad participation to carry on continuous transformation.
119. Mobilize internal resources for ongoing self-direction, self-learning, and self-renewal.
120. Integrate the prototype innovation into the daily activities of the organization.
121. Give special attention to areas in which regression begins to occur.
122. Transfer the OD process to the person or department responsible for OD.
123. Transfer OD skills to a critical mass in the client organization so that the capacity for organizational learning is enhanced.

Phase 8: Separation

124. Gradually wean the client organization away from dependence on the consultant.

125. Recognize when separation is desirable.
126. Initiate open discussion about disengagement.
127. Facilitate discussion with the client regarding the next steps in the change effort.
128. Complete all administrative tasks related to separation.
129. Address and manage psychological issues related to separation.
130. Plan a departure that meets the needs of all involved.
131. Manage own post-separation emotions.
132. Follow up with the client as appropriate after departure.

Core Competencies

Self-Awareness

133. Clarify personal values.
134. Clarify personal boundaries.
135. Increase capacity to perform effectively in an atmosphere of ambiguity.
136. Be aware of the influences of cultural dynamics on interactions with others.
137. Increase personal capacity to perform effectively in the midst of chaos.
138. Know and manage personal biases.
139. Know and manage personal assumptions.
140. Develop mutually trusting relationships with others.
141. Stay focused on the purpose of the consultancy.
142. Learn to recognize and manage personal defensiveness.
143. Solicit feedback from others about your work and your impact on them.
144. Observe impact on others.
145. Recognize when personal feelings have been aroused.
146. Remain physically and mentally healthy while under stress.
147. Resolve ethical issues with integrity.
148. Engage in dialogue with other professionals to develop shared ethical foundations.
149. Avoid getting personal needs met at the expense of the client (i.e., financial, emotional, sexual).
150. Energize others.
151. Use inner power sources for the benefit of the larger universal system.
152. Accept imperfection in self.
153. Accept where the client is.
154. Commit self authentically to clients.

Other Core Competencies

155. Continuously assess the real issues as they surface.
156. Collaborate with internal/external OD professionals.
157. Balance the needs of multiple relationships.
158. Work within the limits of your capabilities.
159. Communicate implications of systems theory.
160. Listen to others.
161. Pay attention to the spontaneous and informal.
162. Consistently maintain confidentiality.
163. Continuously improve your interpersonal skills.
164. Use the latest technology effectively.
165. Interpret cross-cultural influences in a helpful manner.
166. Utilize a solid conceptual framework based on research.
167. Embrace positive paradigm changes.
168. Implement interventions appropriate to your own skill level and the organization's readiness.
169. Use humor creatively and effectively.
170. Handle diversity and diverse situations skillfully.
171. Communicate directions clearly to groups.

## Conclusion

In a changing world, any attempt at providing a "final" competency list will be futile. However, it is important, as well, to have some stability, especially in a rapidly changing world. The methodology described herein, and the process in which conference attendees will participate, will make a strong contribution to the growth and development of programs and individuals within organization development, now and in the future.

## References


American Society for Training and Development, Organization Development Division. (1983). Organization development practitioner self-development guide. Alexandria, VA: Author. (Mimeographed)

Bennis, W. (1969). Organization development: Its nature, origin, and prospects. Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Burke, W.W. (1982). Organization development: Principles and practices. Boston: Little, Brown.

Carey, A., & Varney, G. H. (1983, April). Which skills spell success in OD? Training and Development Journal, 37, 38-40.

Cole, D. (Ed.) (1997). The international registry of OD consultants and The OD Network. Cincinnati, OH: The OD Institute.

Cummings, T. G., & Worley, C. G. (1993). Organization development and change (5th ed.). St. Paul: West Publishing Company.

Eisen, S., Steele, H., & Cherbeneau, J. (1995). Developing OD competence for the future. In: W. J. Rothwell, R. Sullivan, & G. N. McLean (Eds.). Practicing organization development: A guide for consultants (pp. 493-530). San Diego: Pfeiffer & Co.

Lippitt, G., & Lippitt, R. (1978). The consulting process in action. San Diego: University Associates.

McLagan, P. (1989). Models for HRD practice. Alexandria, VA: American Society for Training and Development.

Rothwell, W. J., Sullivan, R., & McLean, G. N. (1995). Practicing organization development: A guide for consultants. San Diego: Pfeiffer & Co.

Spencer, L. M., Jr., & Cullen, B. J. (1978). Taxonomies of organizational change: Literature review and analysis. Boston: McBer and Company.

Steele, F. (1982). The role of the internal consultant. Boston: CBI Publishing.

Varney, G. H. (1981, April). Developing OD competencies. Training and Development Journal, 35, 13-17.

Warrick, D. D., & Donovan, T. (1979, September). Surveying organization development skills. Training and Development Journal, 33, 22-25.

Wigglesworth, D. C. (1995). International OD. In: W. J. Rothwell, R. Sullivan, & G. N. McLean (Eds.). Practicing organization development: A guide for consultants (pp. 421-443). San Diego: Pfeiffer & Co.